

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 28, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

We urge you to reconsider your ban on transgender individuals serving in our country's military. There is no place for discrimination in our Armed Forces or indeed anywhere else in American society. Enforcing your ban could mean discharging active duty soldiers, sailors, Marines, and members of the Air Force who are serving honorably.¹ It also would mean barring other patriotic Americans from serving in the future. Both actions are detrimental to our national security, ill-advised, and contrary to the values upon which our nation was built.

There are thousands of active-duty transgender servicemembers.² Contrary to your rhetoric, their service has not caused "disruption" or "burdened" the military. Rather, their sacrifices have made our nation safer and stronger. Transgender servicemembers wear the same uniform and complete the same missions as their cisgender peers. In combat, their lives are in equal peril. They serve with equal distinction; they are equally deserving of our gratitude and respect.

Implicitly, your ban denies the value of transgender servicemembers, and it questions the professionalism of those who serve beside them. Our Armed Forces have grown more equal and more inclusive over time, often in the face of strident opposition. In 1948, when President Truman moved to racially integrate the military, voices were raised in protest. They were raised again in 2010, when Congress at last repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." At every turn, those voices have been proven wrong. Again and again, members of excluded groups have shown that they can serve with distinction; again and again, the military has proved that it can be a respectful home for all.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis has said the Department of Defense should "measure each policy decision against one critical standard: will the decision affect the readiness and lethality of the force?"³ Based on that standard, we see no rational basis to prevent transgender Americans from serving. A 2016 study conducted at the request of the Department of Defense by the RAND Corporation — a nonpartisan, nonprofit military think tank founded by the U.S. Air Force — suggested that allowing transgender individuals to serve openly would have "no significant impact on unit cohesion or operational readiness."⁴ Meanwhile, your ban would be highly disruptive and have an adverse effect: it would shrink the pool of available recruits and deny our military access to the skills, expertise, and experience of qualified servicemembers.

There is also no evidence to support your claim about the "tremendous medical costs" associated with transgender servicemembers. The same RAND Corporation study suggests that if transgender individuals were officially allowed to

¹ http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/RB9900/RB9909/RAND_RB9909.pdf

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/us/politics/trump-transgender-military.html>

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-announces-that-he-will-ban-transgender-people-from-serving-in-the-military/2017/07/26/6415371e-723a-11e7-803f-a6c989606ac7_story.html

⁴ http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/RB9900/RB9909/RAND_RB9909.pdf

serve openly, the annual cost of resultant gender transition-related medical costs would likely not exceed \$8.4 million.⁵ This is less than one-hundredth of one percent of the military's nearly \$50 billion health care budget. Or, for comparison, roughly equal to the cost to taxpayers of four of your weekend trips to Mar-a-Lago resort.⁶

We have strong concerns about the process by which your ban was created. We are troubled by your apparent refusal to appropriately consult with relevant advisors, experts, or military leaders. News reports have characterized your ban as a "snap decision"⁷ that "caught [the Pentagon] off guard."⁸ Decisions that touch on national security demand careful consideration and responsible debate; anything less endangers the American people.

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the clear unconstitutionality of your ban. As existing case law makes clear, the government cannot discriminate against transgender people on the basis of their status or sex – and the military is not exempt from constitutional requirements. It is not clear to us that your administration has reckoned with these realities.

We urge you again to join us in honoring all those who protect our nation; to fully respect the rights of the citizens you serve; and to reconsider the ill-advised and indefensible policy that you have moved to implement.

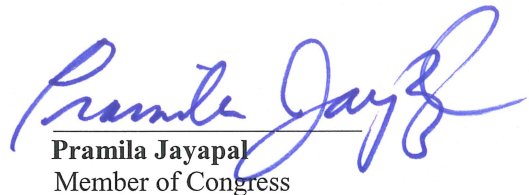
Sincerely,



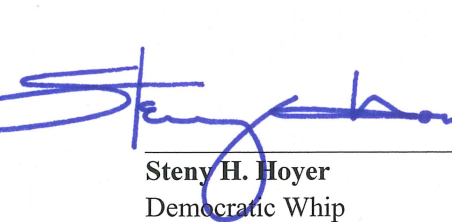
A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Democratic Whip



James E. Clyburn
Assistant Democratic Leader



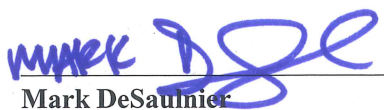
Joseph Crowley
Chairman of the Democratic Caucus

⁵ Ibid

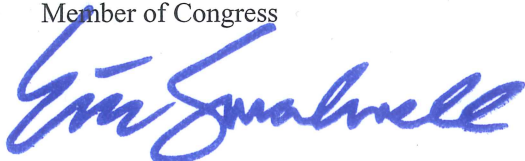
⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/03/17/how-much-is-donald-trumps-travel-and-protection-costing-anyway/?utm_term=.8c6a2eed6155

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/us/politics/trump-transgender-military.html>

⁸ <http://www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-essential-washington-updates-trump-transgender-people-will-not-be-1501074883-htmlstory.html>



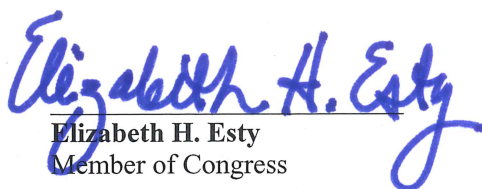
Mark DeSaunier
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



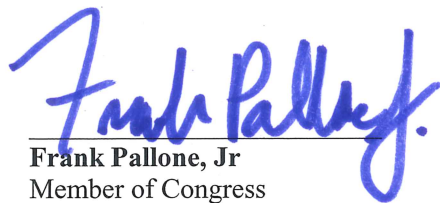
Donald M. Payne Jr.
Member of Congress



Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



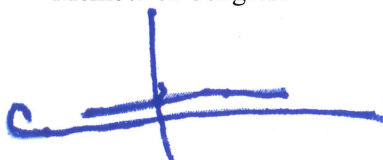
Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



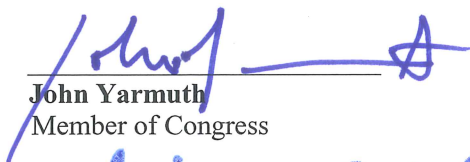
Ruben J. Kihuen
Member of Congress



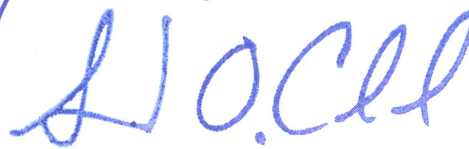
Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



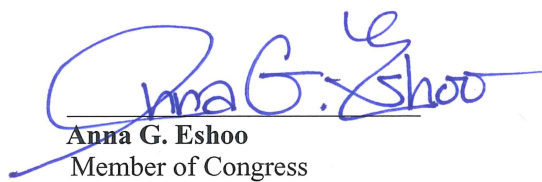
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



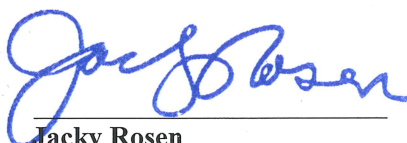
Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

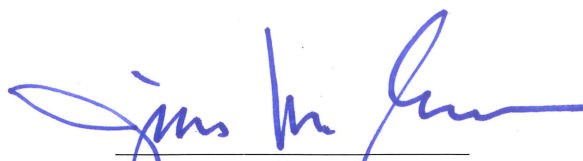


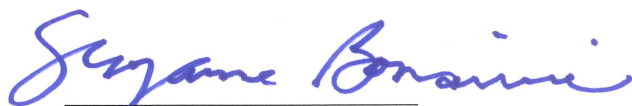
Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress




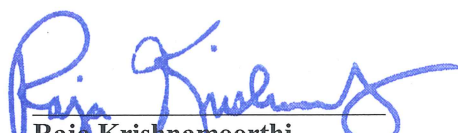
Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

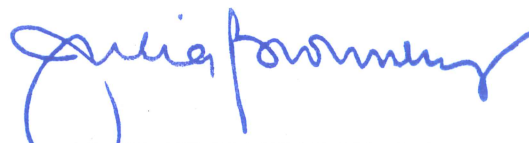

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

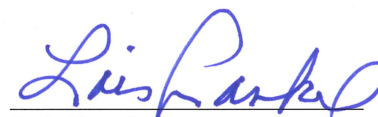

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

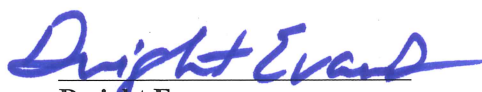

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

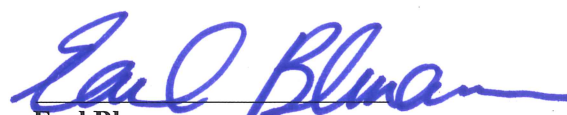

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

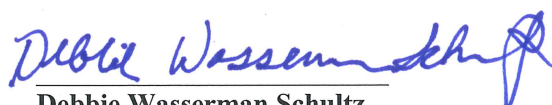

Matthew Cartwright
Member of Congress

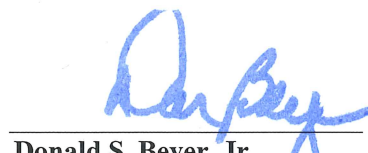

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

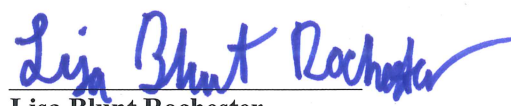

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

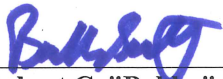

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

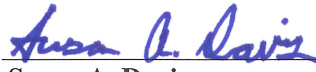

Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress


Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

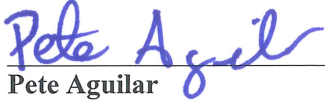

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



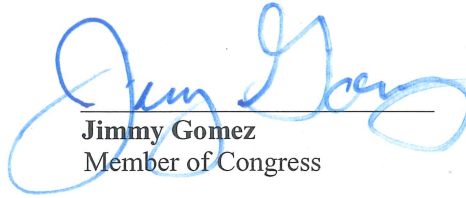
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



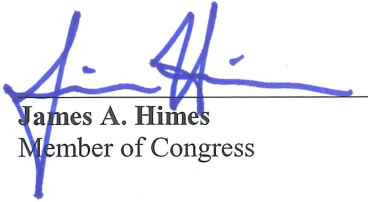
Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



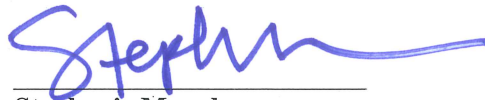
Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



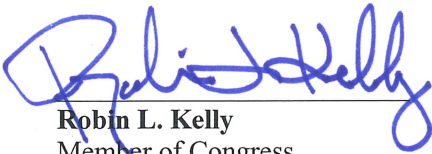
Jimmy Gomez
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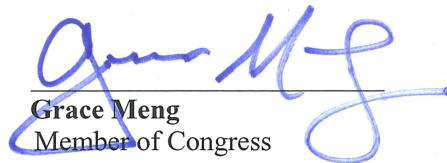
James A. Himes
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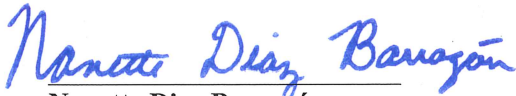
Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



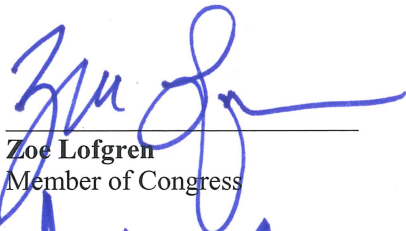
Grace Meng
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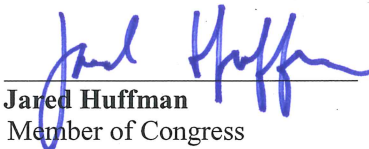
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



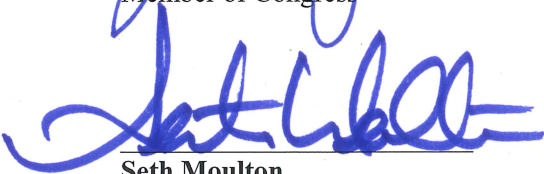
Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



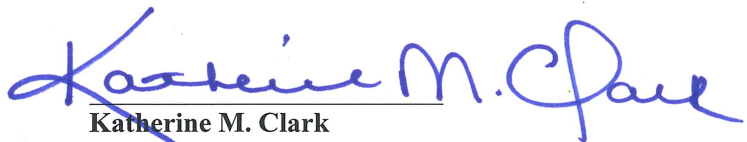
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



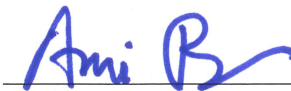
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



Marc Pocan
Member of Congress



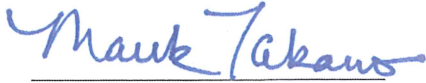
Ami Bera
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



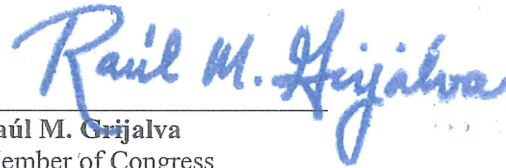
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



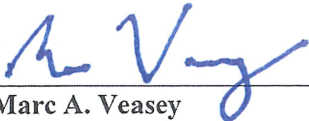
Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



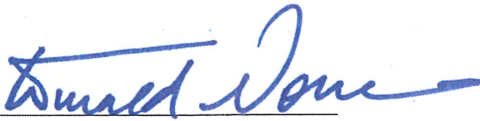
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



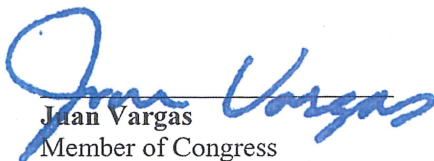
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



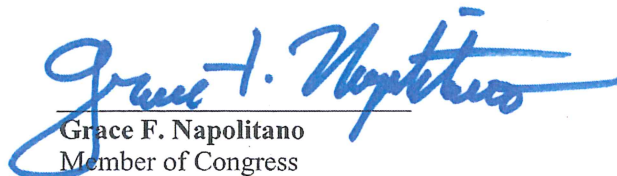
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



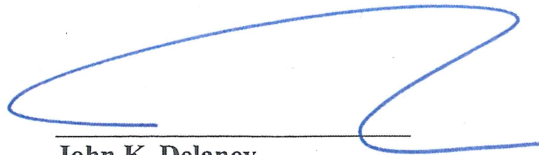
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



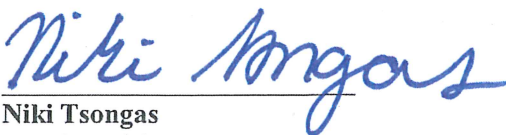
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



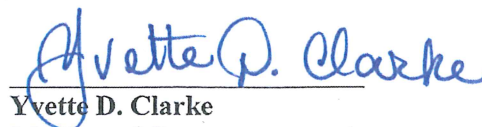
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney
Member of Congress




Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



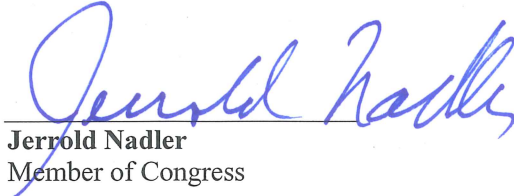
James Langevin
Member of Congress



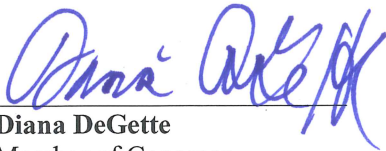
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



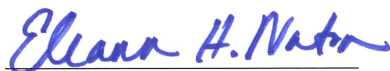
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



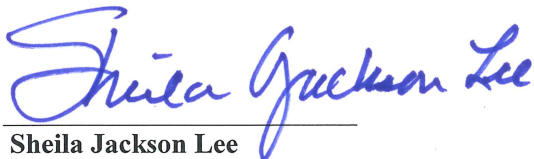
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



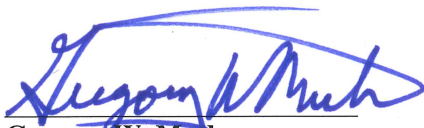
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



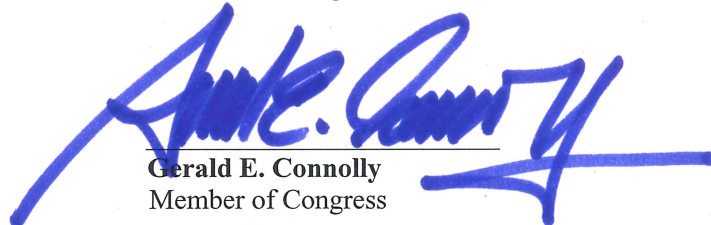
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



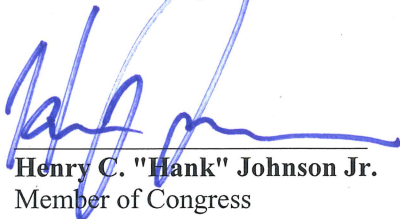
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



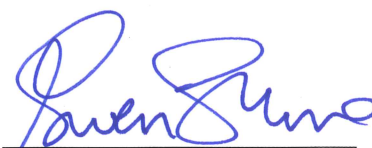
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Tim Walle
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



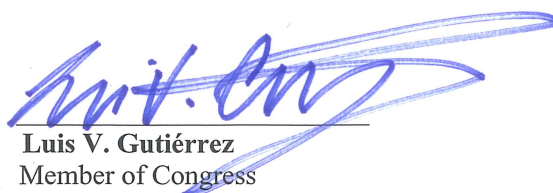
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



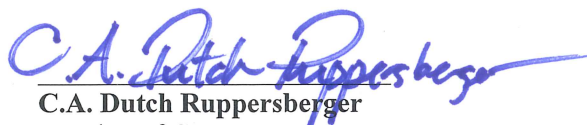
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



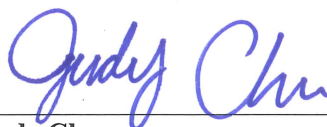
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



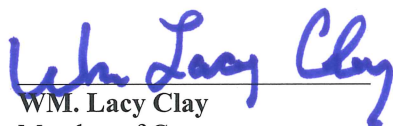
Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress



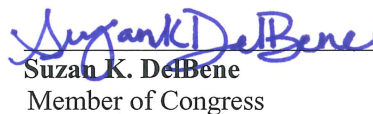
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



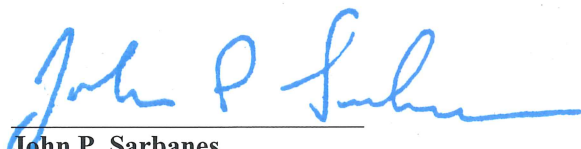
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



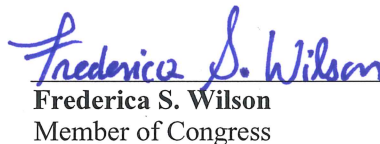
WM. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



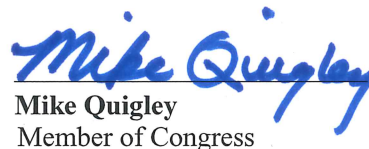
John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



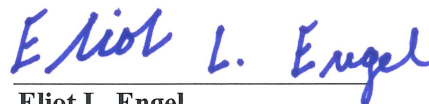
Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress




Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress




Paul Tonko
Member of Congress




Dina Titus
Member of Congress




Jackie Speier
Member of Congress




Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress




Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress




Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress




Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress




Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress




Al Lawson
Member of Congress




Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



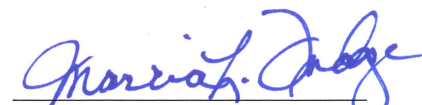
Bill Foster
Member of Congress




Karen Bass
Member of Congress




Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress




Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



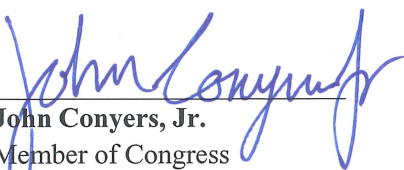
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



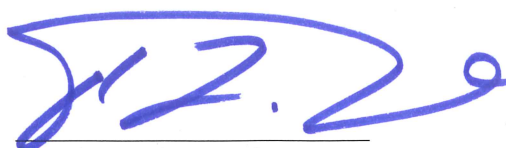
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



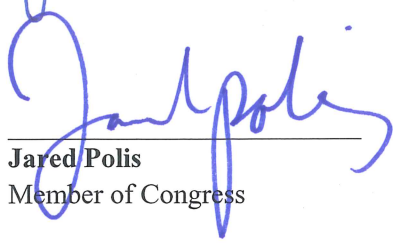
Denny Heck
Member of Congress



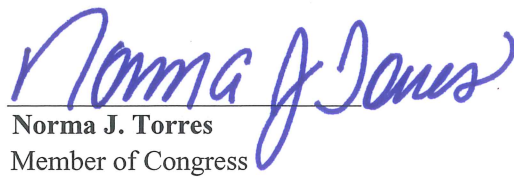
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



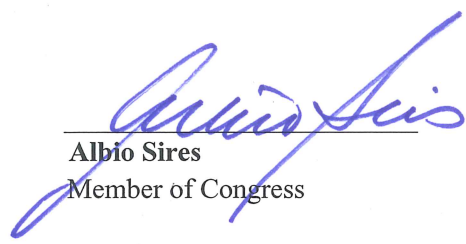
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



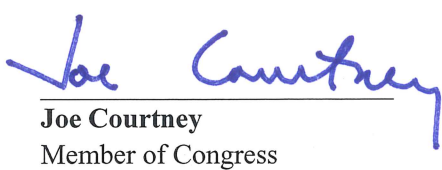
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



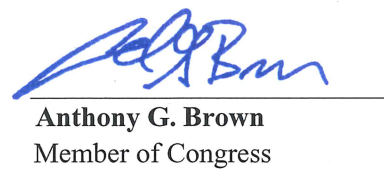
Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



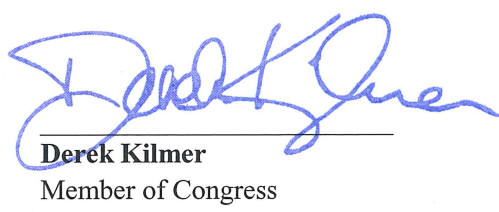
Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress